UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
43rd meeting
held on
Thursday, 19 November 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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92-57887 6415S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.43
2 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION OF EFFORTS TO STUDY, MITIGATE AND MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER (A/47/132, A/47/322-E/1992/102 and Add.1 and 2, A/47/375-S/24429)

1. Mr. REED (Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl), introducing the addenda to the Secretary-General's report on strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequence of the Chernobyl disaster (A/47/332-E/1992/102/Add.1 and 2), recalled the enormity of the Chernobyl disaster, noting that some consequences of a radiation accident could become apparent only after several years. A steep increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer in children had been confirmed by World Health Organization (WHO) experts, who had noted that thyroid cancers were occurring earlier than predicted and were particularly virulent. Two weeks previously, an international meeting at Kiev had dealt with health-related aspects of the disaster and had concluded that a more intensive study and closer monitoring of the affected population were required, which would place a further burden on the severely limited resources of the States concerned. Another meeting had also taken place between the Deputy Coordinator and the competent ministers from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to consider existing coordination arrangements and priorities for action in the areas of health, economic rehabilitation, socio-psychological rehabilitation and food and agriculture. Disappointment had been expressed at that meeting at the poor response to the appeal launched at the September 1991 Pledging Conference, which was apparently due to the time that had elapsed after the accident, media focus on other disaster situations and a global climate of economic stringency. There had also been a hiatus between the departure of the previous Coordinator and his own appointment.

2. Since his appointment, however, he had reviewed the situation in depth. A meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force had been convened and meetings had also been held with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to discuss their priorities for action. On the basis of the detailed report submitted to the current session of the General Assembly, he hoped that financial support could be found to implement the most pressing projects, especially those in the area of child health.

3. A staff member had been assigned to Kiev to coordinate international cooperation for Chernobyl in the region, with responsibility for the affected areas in Belarus and the Russian Federation as well as Ukraine. Plans called for a second staff member to concentrate on mobilizing additional assistance, including that from the private sector. The eight hundredth anniversary of Chernobyl in 1993 would provide a special opportunity to renew commitments for badly needed assistance.

4. Mr. MARTIN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the Community and its member States had repeatedly expressed their concern about the ongoing consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and had contributed both bilaterally and as a community to numerous projects to alleviate the accident's effects. The European Community attached particular importance to the establishment, under the auspices of WHO, of an international programme to mitigate the health effects of the Chernobyl accident and welcomed the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Community was providing assistance through a programme of technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and had recently negotiated an agreement covering such topics as radio ecology, emergency management, health issues and reactor safety.

5. As efforts to deal with the immense impact of the accident would last for years and possibly decades, it was essential that there should be an appropriate division of labour between national authorities, regional organizations and specialized agencies, taking into account the comparative advantage of each and the need to avoid wasteful duplication. The disappointing response to the September 1991 Pledging Conference should not be blamed on inadequate preparation of the Conference, but on the current lack of coordination between the United Nations and regional and other organizations in the area of nuclear safety. The countries of the European Community were involved in extensive programmes of assistance both to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to enhance nuclear safety in the new States of the former Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in accordance with the Secretary-General's new emphasis on the importance of action at the regional level. Certain activities, particularly those of WHO and IAEA, should continue within the framework of the United Nations system. However, there was an urgent need to evaluate many of the other activities envisaged in the Joint Plan of International Cooperation to Mitigate the Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster and to assess the respective roles of the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl and the specialized agencies. Until such a review had taken place, there was little purpose in appealing to Governments for support for the programmes set out in the Joint Plan.

6. In view of that situation, the European Community and its member States had proposed to the Governments of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to conduct a full review of United Nations programmes concerned with Chernobyl with a view to submitting a report to the Economic and Social Council in 1993. That report could then provide the basis for agreement at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly with regard to ongoing projects to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. His delegation would be happy to work with other interested delegations on a resolution establishing the framework for such a review.

7. Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) said that his country devoted approximately a quarter of its national budget to mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, a burden that seriously impeded the country's democratic reforms and transition to a market economy. Data presented at a conference held in Paris in 1991 indicated that the received and expected effective irradiation doses for the population of Belarus were the highest in the world. His Government was extremely concerned with the proliferation of a number of diseases and especially with the unexpected increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer, which had been confirmed by a WHO fact-finding mission. His delegation greatly appreciated the assistance provided by Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. The voluminous and unique data accumulated on the effects of radiation and on practical measures for dealing with it, including social rehabilitation, should be further studied and analysed for the benefit of humanity.

8. The Chernobyl disaster had underscored the importance of collective security and collective responsibility for the prevention of technological disasters. Preventive measures were needed to ensure the safety of existing nuclear reactors and the prevention of long-distance effects of radiation on ecological systems and on people. Practical steps in that direction included new agreements between the Governments of the affected countries and WHO and the Commission of the European Communities, as well as projects being implemented under the Chernobyl Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). His delegation also welcomed the international efforts being coordinated in Washington, Lisbon and Tokyo for the provision of technical and other assistance to the newly independent States of the Commonwealth to deal with the aftermath of Chernobyl.

9. However, he regretted that the vast potential of the United Nations to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster had not been fully utilized. Coordination of United Nations and other activities needed to be strengthened. The review of current and proposed measures contained in the reports might serve as a sound basis for future assistance from many sources, including the private sector.

10. His delegation felt that insufficient attention had been paid to the Chernobyl issue by the United Nations Secretariat and to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 45/190 and 46/150. He requested more detailed information on the budgetary resources to be devoted to a small Secretariat unit to deal with Chernobyl and on future practical arrangements to coordinate international efforts within the United Nations framework. His delegation also sought clarification on the future activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Chernobyl and its interaction with national mechanisms and institutions; on management of the resources of the United Nations Trust Fund for Chernobyl and the monitoring of assistance from sources other than the United Nations; and on new approaches to the dissemination of information on the effectiveness of international cooperation on Chernobyl. A long-term programme should be drawn up to seek new and additional resources, and the use of unconventional approaches should be envisaged to that end.

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

11. The recent Task Force meeting at Kiev had examined the priority projects of the United Nations Joint Plan, which should be included in existing and proposed programmes of aid and assistance to the newly independent States, as well as in the relevant Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Register, which would make it possible to benefit from the comparative advantages of other international coordination mechanisms. In distributing resources, account should be taken of the relative burden imposed by the disaster on individual States, those States' scientific, technical and economic capacities, and the effectiveness of the international support already received. The international coordination process should be based on the principles and mechanisms for coordination of assistance to the newly independent States of the Commonwealth which had been elaborated in Washington, Lisbon and Tokyo earlier in the year.

12. Mr. VOZNYAK (Russian Federation) said that the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster were long-term, and certain aspects were likely to grow more serious with time. The incidence of oncological diseases triggered by radiation peaked some 10-20 years after exposure, while genetic consequences might not surface until the second or subsequent generations. The disaster had affected wide areas of Ukraine and Belarus as well as the Russian Federation, in which new hot spots of contamination continued to be identified. Some 50,000 people had been relocated or had moved of their own free will from the affected area of the Russian Federation since the disaster. Despite the country's economic difficulties, 10 per cent of federal expenditure for capital construction was allocated for mitigation of the Chernobyl disaster. The Russian Federation thus had a pressing need for foreign currency to purchase the necessary supplies and equipment. What his Government sought was not so much direct assistance as mutually advantageous cooperation.

13. It was to be hoped that the knowledge and experience accumulated in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster could be used to develop an effective health-protection system in cases of nuclear accidents and other preventive measures that would benefit all mankind. He called for the development of reliable and scientifically sound security criteria for new technological systems, the organization of mandatory international commissions of experts for major projects, and the creation of an international economic mechanism to deal with the consequences of major transboundary incidents. His country could offer its foreign partners valuable information and experience it had gained in mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe in such varied areas as medicine, agriculture, environmental protection and community work. The Russian Federation was open to economic cooperation in contaminated areas and was prepared to provide favourable conditions for profitable foreign investments.

14. At the recent meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force at Kiev, it had been noted that the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Chernobyl had not been satisfactory. The role of the United Nations Coordinator of

(Mr. Voznyak, Russian Federation)

International Cooperation for Chernobyl had been weakened, particularly by frequent replacements of the Coordinator. His delegation was disappointed that the current Coordinator had not yet been able to visit the Russian Federation, Ukraine or Belarus to familiarize himself firsthand with the problems arising from the Chernobyl accident.

15. Cooperation to mitigate the effects of the Chernobyl accident could be more effective if it was coordinated on a regular basis by a body composed of plenipotentiary representatives of the United Nations, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus. The Russian Federation wished to establish close intergovernmental cooperation with all interested countries to eliminate the effects of radiation accidents, and to that end it would pursue contacts with business communities and non-governmental organizations.

16. The social and psychological stress caused by the Chernobyl accident posed a major problem. Religious organizations, in particular the Russian Orthodox Church, could play a role in bringing relief to the affected population. Together with the Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian Federation planned to implement a number of measures in that area and establish contacts with other religious organizations.

17. In addition to Chernobyl, the Russian Federation had inherited another bitter legacy from the Soviet Union. Vast territories and millions of people had been subjected to radioactive contamination as a result of other radiation accidents and nuclear tests. A special programme for the radiation rehabilitation of the Ural region was being carried out, and assistance was being provided to the population affected by a major radiation accident in the Chelyabinsk region in 1957 and by contamination from a radiochemical installation. The former Soviet Union had conducted 715 nuclear tests, including 212 in the atmosphere. The Russian Government had issued an executive order on measures to enhance the health of the population and provide for the social and economic development of settlements situated in the area of the Semipalatinsk test site. Similar measures would also be required in other areas of the Russian Federation.

18. In an appeal to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, Aleksiy II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, had called upon the international community to alleviate the suffering of the victims of Chernobyl. That would require the speedy implementation of United Nations programmes to mitigate and overcome the consequences of the disaster.

19. Mr. JOSEPH (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that, in May 1991, the World Health Assembly had approved the establishment of the WHO International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident. The first objective of the Programme was to alleviate the health effects of the accident in areas significantly contaminated with radionuclides. Such work focused on clinical examinations and care of exposed populations. The other main objective of the Programme was to learn from the accident in order to improve medical preparedness for radiation emergencies in the future.

(Mr. Joseph, WHO)

20. The Programme was currently implementing four pilot projects which covered the populations in the heavily contaminated areas and dealt with leukaemia and other haemoplastosis, selected thyroid disorders, including thyroid cancer among children, brain damage during exposure in utero, and the management of data for epidemiological registries. The Programme was being implemented by Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation and supported by extrabudgetary funds and other donations, including contributions in kind. A fifth pilot project, on oral health in contaminated areas of Belarus, was being initiated.

21. In 1992, emphasis had been placed on the development of standard protocols for each pilot project procurement and provision of much needed medical equipment, and the training of local staff. Under the thyroid pilot project, 16 ultrasonic instruments had been provided for use in examinations of thyroid cases in hospitals and during field missions. Instruments and kits had been contributed for immunoassay and enzyme assay to determine thyroid function and monitor the treatment of thyroid cancer. Nearly 100 staff had received domestic training in the use of those instruments, and overseas training of specialists had been sponsored.

22. In April 1991, an agreement had been signed between the Director-General of WHO and the ministries of health of the three States. The agreement stipulated that all health-related international projects should be coordinated with, or integrated into, the International Programme. It also called for the establishment of a Management Committee, composed of participating ministries, WHO and representatives of other Member States supporting the Programme. The first meeting of that Committee had been held at Kiev on 5 and 6 November 1992.

23. It was expected that the pilot projects would be completed in about two years. By then, the roughly 270,000 people living in the strictly controlled zones of the three affected States would have undergone appropriate screening and medical examinations. Advanced examination of the patients would also be performed, and some curative procedures would be supported. The results would be assessed and would enable preliminary conclusions to be drawn for long-term investigations of the various health consequences of the Chernobyl accident. However, the human and financial resources available to the three affected States and the WHO Programme were currently insufficient. It had been estimated that, over the next 15 to 20 years, approximately $150 to $200 million would be needed.

24. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukraine) said that the meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Chernobyl at Kiev on 3 and 4 November 1992 had contributed to the strengthening of coordination of international efforts to deal with the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The meeting had been particularly important in that it had designated priority areas for international cooperation to mitigate the effects of the accident and had proposed specific projects. His delegation nevertheless regretted

(Mr. Goudima, Ukraine)

that the meeting had been convened somewhat hastily and without due preparation, which had been reflected in its work.

25. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/47/322/Add.1), in their efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, international organizations were to give priority to health, economic rehabilitation, socio-psychological rehabilitation and food and agriculture. Unfortunately, those priorities did not include measures to alleviate long-term radiation contamination or lower the radiation background of vast territories, nor did they cover other urgent problems for whose solution international assistance would be very important.

26. The complexity and diversity of the problems caused by the Chernobyl accident required greater involvement by the United Nations and its bodies and specialized agencies. Unfortunately, the Secretary-General's report did not give much attention to prospects for further international cooperation in the area of Chernobyl. The report itself had been hastily prepared and was purely informative. It made little mention of the possible participation of a number of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, such as the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in solving the problems caused by the Chernobyl disaster. At its thirty-second session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended that ECE, in close cooperation with IAEA, should conduct a study of the potential danger of atomic radiation in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

27. Another shortcoming of the Secretary-General's report was that it did not reflect the organizational difficulties of efforts to deal with the Chernobyl problem. For several months after the retirement of the previous United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl, a new Coordinator had not been appointed, and the unit of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with Chernobyl had for a long time been unable to acquire a permanent place for its work and to determine its composition, in spite of the fact that the relevant allocations had been made and candidates had been nominated. His delegation hoped that the new Coordinator would carefully examine the situation that had emerged and take the necessary measures.

28. In the current circumstances, when dozens of international organizations, agencies and funds had been mobilized to solve the problems caused by Chernobyl, the role of the United Nations Coordinator was particularly important. The Coordinator was not only a link between other organizations but was virtually responsible for the implementation of programmes. The Secretariat unit dealing with Chernobyl could assist him in his efforts.

29. His delegation hoped that the international community, including States Members of the United Nations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals would participate actively in solving the problems caused by Chernobyl. The most difficult and long-term task was to find ways of counteracting effects of radiation on human health. There was already clear

(Mr. Goudima, Ukraine)

evidence of such negative effects: the number of all illnesses had increased dramatically, and the number of congenital deformities and developmental anomalies, thyroid tumours and disorders and blood diseases were increasing. There were more than 3 million people, including 580,000 children, in the high-risk category who required special medical treatment because of their exposure to radiation. The solution of such problems without external assistance would be extremely difficult because of the low level of diagnostic and medical treatment and a shortage of medicine.

30. One of the most complicated problems, the solution of which was vital not only for Ukraine but for the entire European region, involved the shielding of the fourth reactor. In its current state, the existing structure, known as "Sarcophagus", could not be considered absolutely reliable; it did not guarantee radiation safety, especially under such extreme conditions as earthquakes and storms. In view of the exceptional nature of the problem, the Government of Ukraine had announced an international competition to transform the Ukrytie site at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant into an ecologically safe system.

31. Ukraine had to cope with the complex and multifaceted problems of Chernobyl at a time when it faced a complicated internal situation. The country's economic situation continued to deteriorate and was characterized by a sharp drop in production rates in all areas of the economy, inflation and a decline in the standard of living. Under the circumstances, it was extremely difficult to mobilize resources to solve the problems caused by the accident. Ukraine would welcome all measures taken by the United Nations Coordinator to convene an international forum of international business circles and social organizations with a view to mobilizing funds for the implementation of priority Chernobyl projects. Since Ukraine had not yet acquired the necessary experience, and did not have the relevant knowledge and technology to solve the problems caused by Chernobyl, the Coordinator should promote cooperation with a view to developing, producing and exchanging technologies to solve those problems.

32. The international community's activities in the area of the treatment and recuperation of children affected by the accident and the provision of essential medical equipment and medicines to affected regions were particularly valuable. While Ukraine appreciated the assistance it had received from many countries in eliminating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, it understood that the principal responsibility lay with the Ukrainian Government, on which the effectiveness of the measures being carried out would largely depend. In accordance with a decision of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, a draft national programme on the elimination of the consequences of the disaster and the social protection of citizens affected by it had been prepared for 1993-1995 and the period up to the year 2000. In accordance with a resolution of the Supreme Council, preliminary work was being done to ensure the complete closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1993.

33. Ms. O'DELL (International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) said that, at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the representative of IAEA had informed the Committee of the conclusions and recommendations of the year-long International Chernobyl Project. That undertaking, which IAEA had been requested to coordinate, involved some 200 scientists from 23 countries and seven international organizations. The assessment of the radiological and health situation had been limited to the urgent needs of the population living in areas affected by radioactive contamination. Recommendations had been made concerning areas where further study was needed and where action should be taken.

34. One of the projects proposed by participating Governments related to the use of caesium binders to reduce the radiocaesium contamination of the milk and meat of grazing animals. During the past year, controlled experiments, extensive field trials, training sessions and technology transfers had demonstrated that that method was a cost-effective way of reducing food contamination and allowing many farmers to return to their traditional farming practices. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was the lead agency for the implementation of that project, to which IAEA lent its technical support.

35. Subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, IAEA intended to: continue supporting the work of the Chernobyl Centre for International Research by participating in the work of the associated International Scientific Advisory Committee; begin a retrospective assessment of doses received by Chernobyl decontamination workers, evacuees and other high-risk groups and review the protective measures taken; and support research and development on Chernobyl-related issues aimed at providing information needed for the proper interpretation, assessment and management of the post-Chernobyl radiological situation. In carrying out those activities, IAEA would continue to cooperate with other organizations providing assistance to the affected States.

36. Mr. MINAGAWA (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased to learn that the International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident, established by the World Health Assembly and supported with a contribution of $20 million by the Japanese Government, was well under way. it was to be hoped that the Programme would achieve its three main objectives of alleviating the health effects of the accident, consolidating experience with a view to improving medical preparedness for future radiological emergencies and obtaining unique scientific data in medical treatment for human radiology.

37. International cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the accident would have to be carefully coordinated in order to ensure the most effective utilization of resources, particularly because they were needed to address the many other major changes currently taking place around the world. The Secretariat should therefore make vigorous efforts to ensure greater coordination in order to obtain effective, unambiguous and credible results and avoid duplication of effort.

38. Mr. LEFEVRE (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the UNESCO Chernobyl programme had launched a three-year programme, in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IAEA and the European Community, to study the hydrological impacts of nuclear power plant systems. The first international seminar had been held in Paris in September 1992, with the participation of 15 different countries. An international Chernobyl Ecological Research Network had also been launched in October 1992 at Minsk. A preliminary study on the geochemical effects of radioactive contamination would be launched before the end of the year.

39. UNESCO had also developed a large-scale project to address the major problem of the psychological rehabilitation of those affected by the disaster. Four pilot community centres for psychological rehabilitation were currently being developed - two in Belarus, one in the Russian Federation and one in Ukraine - and should be operational by mid-1993. The project included the construction of facilities, a review of the specific needs of the population covered by each centre, training-programme development and staff recruitment and training. Once operational, each centre would be closely monitored for a period of six months. A second centre would soon be established in the Russian Federation, and four additional centres were currently being planned.

40. At the request of Ukraine, UNESCO was also preparing an international mission to review the current state of education and services in the field of psychology. The mission would seek to assess the needs to be met through international cooperation and the appropriateness of creating an international centre for psychological rehabilitation. A UNESCO office had been opened at Kiev in October 1992 to coordinate those activities.

41. In the educational field, UNESCO was preparing a reference document on Chernobyl and the environment and planning a large environmental education meeting, to be held in December 1992 at Kiev. In addition, a pre-planning study on the UNESCO project, to establish an economic and social development area for the relocation of some of the displaced from contaminated areas had been prepared with assistance from Denmark and was available at the UNESCO liaison office. Steps were already being taken in the Russian Federation towards the creation of such a development area, and Belarus and Ukraine had expressed interest in the establishment of similar areas in their territories. UNESCO had also conducted preliminary studies on a programme for the large-scale production of resettlement housing and would work closely on that project with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other agencies.

42. In addition, UNESCO had contributed to the implementation of the Chernobyl Programme by mobilizing cooperation and resources necessary for the conduct of a number of vital humanitarian missions; it was also organizing fund-raising cultural events.

(Mr. Lefevre, UNESCO)

43. Working under heavy constraints, the United Nations system was endeavouring to move from mere coordination to genuine cooperation, and it pursued the aim, which UNESCO fully supported, of placing its response to emergencies within a longer-term development framework. UNESCO had been heartened by the conclusions of the recent Inter-Agency Task Force meeting, which had affirmed that the UNESCO Chernobyl Programme was working exactly within the updated priorities set by the ministers of the affected States.

44. Mr. REED (Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl), responding to comments by delegations, said that the general restructuring process within the Secretariat had also affected the Organization's work on Chernobyl. He himself had only been appointed in June 1992 and had so far been prevented by pressure of time and commitments from visiting the area. The Deputy Coordinator had, however, visited the three countries concerned, and he hoped to make a similar visit in the near future.

45. Extensive consultations had recently been held on the best means of deploying the limited Secretariat resources available and it had been decided to assign one of the two professional posts to the region, to serve the three affected Governments on the ground. That decision had been implemented, and one staff member was currently in Kiev. Subject to availability of the necessary resources for 1993, a qualified candidate for the second post would be appointed. Other resources available for setting up a Secretariat unit were very modest, comprising some secretarial support and provisions for travel, which had already been entirely exhausted.

46. Referring members to the report contained in document A/47/322/Add.1 and to his own introductory statement for answers to other questions raised, he said that his office was cooperating closely with the three affected Governments to identify priority areas for action which would command a sympathetic international response. The report provided the first compilation of information on measures that had actually been implemented. The Inter-Agency Task Force meeting at Kiev had concluded on a positive note: priorities for future action had been clearly defined and more information was available than ever before. Given the necessary interaction between donors, non-governmental organizations and Governments with the three Governments concerned, he was confident that real progress would be achieved in bringing assistance to the region.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(b) FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/47/19 and Add.1 and A/47/395)

47. Mr. CABRAL (Guinea-Bissau) said that problems of food and agricultural development could only be addressed by an integrated approach which took into account their global context. Such an approach constituted one of the

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

principal merits of Agenda 21, which provided a vehicle for developing dynamic and innovative responses to the world's problems that was consistent with the objective of sustainable development.

48. Noting the tragic connection between poverty and environmental degradation, he questioned how the most disadvantaged groups in society could be constrained to exercise environmental discipline when any disruption of their traditional lifeline to their immediate environment signified certain death. Policies must be sensitive to the interdependence of food, poverty and the environment.

49. The chapters of Agenda 21 dealing with such key issues as poverty, consumption patterns, natural resources management, agriculture and sustainable rural development pointed to specific measures which could be implemented in pursuit of its goals. For its part, the Government of Guinea-Bissau based its agricultural development policy on functional strategies conducive to the gradual attainment of food self-sufficiency. The incorporation of environmental, cultural and socio-economic considerations in development programmes led to greater participation by the beneficiaries themselves, and measures should therefore be adopted to prepare the more vulnerable groups to withstand the adverse effects of growth and structural adjustment programmes.

50. The key to the success of food self-sufficiency programmes lay in breaking the vicious cycle of subsistence farming and in transforming small-scale producers into agents of development, equipped with the necessary skills and materials to manage agricultural projects and to participate in the marketing of their produce. To that end, national capacities must be strengthened, with a view to the ultimate phasing out of external assistance, and investments should be concentrated in the agricultural sector and in technical assistance, as recommended by the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. In that context, he noted with concern the recent drop in levels of external assistance for agriculture and the deterioration in the world food security situation which, in Africa, had become critical.

51. In its report on the work of its eighteenth session, the World Food Council had concluded that efforts must be made to enhance the efficiency of emergency relief programmes. He noted with concern the decline in contributions to the development activities of the World Food Programme (WFP), since food security and self-sufficiency could only be attained through the promotion of economic growth and support for agricultural programmes in the food-deficit countries. Those programmes should aim not only to meet food needs, but also to promote surplus production for export as a source of much-needed foreign currency.

52. In view of the need for close cooperation between the relevant agencies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21, particular

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

importance attached to the role of the World Food Council, and he hoped that wisdom would prevail in determining the Council's future.

53. Finally, he believed that the forthcoming International Conference on Nutrition would make a vital contribution to endeavours to arrest the tragic upward trend in hunger and malnutrition.

54. Mr. MALLYA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77. Despite advances in agricultural technology, malnutrition and hunger had continued to increase, creating the paradox of misery in the midst of plenty. The World Food Council had been created by the World Food Conference in 1974 in response to the need for a collective food security strategy within the framework of world food policy, and it had performed admirably in coordinating world food policy in increasingly difficult conditions. Advances in food production technology had not kept pace with the population explosion and had been attenuated by wasteful consumption patterns, which had created artificial food shortages in food-deficit areas. The situation had been further exacerbated by natural calamities and the outbreak of ethnic rivalries with the end of the cold war, which had created new refugee flows that had caused resources to be directed away from food production.

55. His delegation was convinced that the World Food Council had made important strides over its 20 years of existence and believed that the general restructuring process in the social and economic fields of the United Nations should also involve world food issues and institutions like the Council, thereby strengthening its capacity to deal with development issues in an integrated manner. Accordingly, his delegation believed that the Council should be strengthened by increasing its manpower and financial resources so that it could fulfil its mandate. While retaining its identity and its secretariat in Rome, the Council should work more closely with FAO and other Rome-based food agencies to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency and should be more closely coordinated with the Economic and Social Council.

56. As most of the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa were currently experiencing the worst drought in recent memory, he stressed the need for concerted efforts by the Organization and its specialized agencies to mobilize relief and assistance. He expressed his country's gratitude for the assistance provided thus far.

57. Ms. NCHAPI (Lesotho) agreed that the objectives of the World Food Conference remained as important in the 1990s as they had been in 1974. However, Lesotho's views differed from those of other members of the Council as to how the United Nations system, including the Council, might improve its effectiveness in dealing with the problem of world hunger and malnutrition. Her delegation felt that the Council's mandate and functions could best be served by other United Nations agencies. In its current composition, the

(Ms. Nchapi, Lesotho)

Council did not qualify to do the coordinating and strengthening work of international agencies concerned with food production and distribution such as FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and WFP. Collective world food security could be achieved only through the reorientation, revitalization and strengthening of FAO, WFP, IFAD and the United Nations, and there would be no role for the World Food Council under that arrangement.

58. The Council's functions could be distributed as follows: food-security monitoring and analysis as well as enhancing the efficiency of production and distribution of food and agricultural products would be the global responsibility of FAO, at whose biennial Conferences ministers of agriculture would discuss the roles played by FAO and WFP. Those ministers would also discuss the role played by IFAD during meetings of the Fund's Governing Council. FAO responsibilities would have to be coordinated with those of WFP and IFAD; the Secretary-General of the United Nations would oversee and coordinate, through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the implementation by the relevant food agencies of decisions reached by the ministers of agriculture. On the basis of the reports from those agencies and the Secretary-General, heads of State and Government would determine policy directions through a revitalized Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

59. Such an arrangement would not only facilitate the involvement of the highest authorities in all levels of the work of those international agencies but would also lead to a more equitable and efficient distribution of food between and within countries, thereby ensuring that the operational activities of those agencies were coordinated under an effective and integrated world food policy.

60. The submission of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the World Food Council to the General Assembly as the Assembly considered the reform of the United Nations in general and that of the Economic and Social Council in particular was timely. She hoped that the General Assembly would take the report into consideration as it searched for the most effective ways of fulfilling the World Food Council's mandate within the framework of the overall restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations.

61. Mr. MARKS (United States of America) recalled that his country's commitment to the goals and objectives of the World Food Council was beyond doubt. However, since the Council's existing institutional arrangements did not permit those goals and objectives to be met, his Government had reluctantly concluded that the Council was incapable of carrying out its policy formulation and coordination functions and that such functions should be assigned to other bodies within the United Nations system. His delegation firmly believed that all States had a common interest in improving the system-wide capability of the United Nations to address such matters. The necessary

(Mr. Marks, United States)

improvement could best be achieved by dissolving the Council and transferring its responsibilities to a newly restructured Economic and Social Council and the ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/C.2/47/L.29, L.40 and L.42)

Draft resolution on economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and on the Arab population of the Syrian Golan (A/C.2/47/L.29)

62. Mr. MUDZAKIR (Malaysia) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.29 on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Djibouti, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates. The sponsors had deep sympathy for the Palestinian people and hoped that the resolution would receive the full support of all delegations.

Draft resolution on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation (A/C.2/47/L.40)

63. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77, said that it was the expectation of the sponsors that the draft would enjoy wide support from the Committee.

Draft resolution on the international Conference on Population and Development (A/C.2/47/L.42)

64. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 as well as China and Japan, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.42. The sponsors attached particular importance to the draft text and hoped that it would be unanimously adopted by the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on integration of economies in transition into the world economy (A/C.2/47/L.35)

65. Mr. LUEDIG (Estonia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Azerbaijan and Turkey, and said he was sure that the draft resolution would enjoy the support of the entire Committee following informal consultations.

AGENDA ITEM 80: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

Draft resolution on protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/C.2/47/L.38/Rev.1)

66. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that it would be unanimously adopted by the Committee.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.